



## **Louisiana Eye M.D.s Donate \$15,000 to New Orleans Council on Aging/Aging Disability Resource Center for Vision Programs in Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes**

*As the world's Ophthalmologists (Medical Eye Doctors and Surgeons) call New Orleans "home" for a week, Louisiana Eye Medical Doctors and Surgeons bring awareness to need for lifetime eye health by promoting importance of adult vision screenings*

The Louisiana Ophthalmology Association (LOA) is partnering with community and senior center leaders in the tri-parish area to promote eye health by donating \$15,000 to the New Orleans Council on Aging and Aging Disability Resource Center/LouisianaAnswers.com for vision programs and screenings, announced LOA President Bradley Black, MD with NOCOA Director Howard Rodgers.

NOCOA Director Rodgers said New Orleans' older adults are more susceptible to certain eye diseases. According to EyeCareAmerica.com, African Americans are 1.5 times more likely to suffer from cataracts, five times more likely to develop glaucoma, and twice as likely to develop diabetic retinopathy. Women over 45 are more likely to develop these eye-diseases than men, and less likely to be treated. Because most eye diseases are age-related, black female seniors are especially at risk for blindness as they age, due to eye disease.

"Most eye diseases in the early stages lack symptoms, so the only way to detect them is through a dilated pupil exam," said Dr. Ramesh Ayyala, Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of Residency Program, Tulane University. "African-Americans and women over 45 are at a higher risk for diseases like glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy, which can cause blindness."

Mr. Rodgers said the grant will be used to partner with local medical schools and eye doctors to screen adults over 21 at community centers and churches in Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes. The screenings will be announced in the first quarter of 2014. NOCOA provides a range of health services to more than 3000 older adults every day.

"There is no shortage of adults in need of eye care, and these free services will help us curb vision loss among our loved ones. We are extremely grateful to our eye doctors and surgeons for this gift. Our sight is best protected by skilled eye doctors," said Mr. Rodgers.

"We believe this grant will be a big help in providing a first-line of sight-saving defense for adults. Our partnership with NOCOA and LouisianaAnswers.com will go a long way in reaching those in need," said Dr. Black.

Dr. Ayyala said symptoms which should encourage an individual to have an eye exam include vision loss, blank spots or dark areas in one's vision, blurred or double vision, poor night vision, faded colors, sensitivity to light or general eye pain.

Paul Sternberg, M.D., President, American Academy of Ophthalmology said, "The eye health awareness program initiated by the New Orleans Council on Aging and the Louisiana

ophthalmologists is a worthy community project with one objective: better eye health for older adults in the New Orleans community. It sets an outstanding example of citizens and Medical Doctors working together for better citizen eye health.”

More than 25,000 eye physicians, surgeons and industry representatives from 123 countries are gathered in New Orleans for the 117<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

For information on the NOCOA Eye Screening Program, contact NOCOA at (504) 821-4121 to register or email [quannie13@yahoo.com](mailto:quannie13@yahoo.com).

***About the Louisiana Ophthalmology Association:*** We dedicate ourselves to enhancing the quality of life for every individual we treat by helping each to see his or her best, and by preserving and protecting our patients' vision and eye health throughout life. We are committed to responding compassionately to our patients' individual needs and to advancing the highest standards of comprehensive eye care. For more information about LOA, please visit: <http://www.louisianaeyemds.org>

*The New Orleans Council on Aging (NOCO) exists to protect the rights, promote the well being, and enhance the self-esteem of New Orleans elderly by generating opportunities for self-reliance and independence. The New Orleans Council on Aging is a private, non-profit corporation which serves as the Area Agency on Aging for Orleans Parish. It coordinates the regional Aging and Disability Resource Center, in coordination with the Louisiana Governor's Office on Elderly Affairs, through LouisianaAnswers.com for the tri-parish area. Howard Rodgers is Executive Director.*